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THOUGHTS
ON
PUBLIC WORSHIP:

PART THE FIRST.

CONTAINING

A FULL REVIEW OF

Mr. WAKEFIELD's Objections to this Practice;

WITH

SUITABLE ANSWERS.

By I. BRUCKNER.

Ce feroit fans doubte, bannir l'enjouement de la société que de pro-
scrire cette raillerie innocente qui exerce avec gaieté, sur de légers dé-
fauts, une justice qui semble leur être due.

Tbétorie des Sentimens agréables.

LONDON:

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MDCC XCII.

THOMAS

OF

PUBLIC WORKS

PART I

CONTENTS

A FULL VIEW OF

THE WORKS OF



D. A. DICKINSON

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PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

N. B. *The Second Part of this Work, containing a further Discussion of the Subject of Public Worship, chiefly Historical, is ready for the Press.*



INTRODUCTION.

WHILE the subject of Reformation was debating in the House of Commons during the reign of Henry the Eighth, one of the Members, a Gentleman of Grey's-Inn, struck with the vast variety of theological opinions, the endless, inextricable controversies on almost every article of faith, and the impossibility that any man (much less the people) should make up his mind about them, with any satisfaction to himself, concluded that the only religion obligatory to mankind, is the belief of one Supreme Being, the author of Nature, and the necessity of good morals, in order to obtain his favour*.

A disgust of the same kind has produced of late an effect somewhat similar on a Gentleman, not of the law, but of the clerical order. Mr. Wakefield, a man respectable on many accounts, but on none more, than his attachment to what he deems

* Hume's Hist. of England, vol. iii. pag. 163.

truth, and the noble sacrifice he has made to it, has been induced of late to publish a pamphlet with a view to cry down Social Worship, or the joint supplications of the multitude in the temple, not only as unwarrantable in its nature and tendency, but contrary, moreover, to the practice and express command of Christ and his Apostles.

Whoever undertakes to combat an error should be upon his guard against the opposite extreme. True religion is at all times more exposed from the rashness of its defenders, than from any well-supported attack on the part of its enemies. It will not be amiss, therefore, to inform the reader, that I am not one of those, who would compass sea and land to make a proselyte to the practice of sabbathizing. I have always considered the act of justice, mercy, or forbearance which may precede the oblation as more than the oblation itself. But though attendance on public worship is not the first among the requisites which constitute true piety, yet it is one of the number; it is an inducement to true piety, and a means of preserving it among men in general, especially amongst the lower class; and as such I undertake to defend it against the unreserved attack of Mr. W—.

A REVIEW,

A REVIEW, &c.

SECTION I.

Jewish Worship considered.

ON hearing a man inveigh against Social Worship, as an absurd and dangerous practice, the first thought which occurs is, that, our Saviour having made it a rule to frequent the Synagogue wherever he came, it behoves him who ventures upon such invectives to have the strongest conviction imaginable, that they reflect no discredit on the most respectable of all characters.

If public prayers, such as obtain among us, were likewise in use among the Jews, as will be shewn hereafter ; if, moreover, our public prayers are no better than “ a medley of vain babbling, a pharisaical shew of frantic gestures and solemn vi-
“ sages* ;” and if as such they were condemned by Christ, as it is alledged by Mr. W—, how could

* Essay, pag. 13.

Christ at any time, but more especially after passing this sentence, honour and encourage them with his presence? Such an example was inconsistent with the character, I shall not say of a sage, but of any man who valued himself upon his reputation: and for the truth of my assertion I appeal to the conduct of Mr. Wakefield, who, as I am told, has for some time past carefully avoided, and for very good reasons, appearing in any public place of worship, whether of the conformist or non-conformist kind.

Mr. W— has felt the force of this objection, and endeavoured to remove it accordingly. His answer, however, though much to the credit of his candour, is by no means adequate to the purpose for which it was intended. “I do not pretend,” says he*, “to very satisfactory acquaintance upon the subject of Jewish devotion, and therefore, if wrong, will gladly accept of more accurate information; but I find no circumstances in the Scripture concerning these people, that wear any aspect of public worship as we conduct it. The object of the Jews in their assemblies, seems to be merely to recite the Scriptures, in the way of praise and thanksgiving, and to sing hymns after the custom of the first Christians mentioned by Pliny. When the High Priest makes a prayer it is to himself. The congregation neither hear him, nor seem

* Pag. 85.

“ desirous

“ desirous of hearing him, nor at all disposed to hear him.”

I shall not undertake to remove the charge brought here against the chosen race; I shall only observe, that were any Jew occasionally to enter into any place of Christian worship, he probably would find room to return the compliment; but should he turn critic on the occasion, and reason thus: “ When their High Priest makes a prayer it is to himself: the congregation seems neither disposed nor desirous to hear him; *ergo*, there are no public prayers among them.” He would be laughed at.

“ I find (says Mr. W—) no circumstance in the Scripture concerning this people, that wears any aspect of public worship as we conduct it.” I wish he had told us, how far the affinity between the Jewish and the Christian worship is to extend, before he will admit of the real existence of the former. I have too good an opinion however of his candour to suspect him of any propensity towards cavilling. I shall therefore proceed to my information; but being no stranger to Mr. W—’s reputation as a scholar, if I call what I have to say on this subject *information*; it is less on his account, than that of the Christian readers in general, who, after Mr. W— has been pleased to set his mark upon it as a mere *foppery*, ought to know that Christ himself attended social worship.

I am here considering the Jewish mode of worship as it obtained in the Synagogue, at the time when
Christ

Christ attended it; and observe accordingly that, except a trifling alteration in the number and order of public prayers, this worship was the same as that instituted in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; the Jews having, from that time, made it a point not to innovate in their laws relative to religion*. Before that period, the public reading of the law took place among them, but once in seven years according to Moses's injunction, Deut. xxxi. and even discontinued entirely in the times both of the Kings and Judges; after their return from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews introduced it into the daily performance of divine service, the remaining parts of which were blessings and prayers. The latter consisted not only of private effusions, according to the devotional taste of every individual, but also in joint acts, all uniting after the words of the officiating Levite in the utterance of the same sentiments. That this is a true representation of the matter appears from Ezra's and Nehemiah's account. And *Ezra*, says the former, *opened the book (of the law) in the sight of all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up; and Ezra blessed the Lord the great God, and all the people answered Amen, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their head, and they bow'd their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground*†. Again—*They (the children of Israel) stood up in their*

* Legibus namque semper utimur iisdem, in quibus sine fine consistimus.—Josephus contra Apion, lib. ii. cap. 7.—N. B. This is said with reference to changes in religion.

† Nehem. viii. 5 and 6.

*place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God**. In a subsequent verse we read that eight of the Levites *standing in a raised seat cried with a loud voice unto the Lord*; after which the people were exhorted to stand up also, and a prayer was delivered containing together with doxologies, confessions and supplications†.

I have not quoted this fragment of Jewish history as having escaped the observation of Mr. W—. There is ample room for the supposition that he had it in view, and meant to lessen the force of it, when he wrote the paragraph which we have copied from his essay. What reason but this could induce him to suggest a difference, between praise and thanksgivings on the one hand, and prayers and supplications on the other; as if the former of the two imaginary opposites characterized, in a particular manner the Jewish, and the latter the Christian social worship; as if the Almighty could put up with accidental improprieties in the one, and not in the other.

Nehemiah's account is by no means favorable to Mr. W—'s dislike of public worship. Here was, I shall not say a whole chorus of Levites, but a whole nation crying out *Amen*, and uniting in the same address to the Deity. Mr. W—expresses great dislike to the mode of conducting public devotion in the Church of England. He calls it "the

* Nehem. ix. 3.

† Ibid. x. 4, 5, &c.

" united

“ united noises of the parson, the clerk, and the congregation*.” If a man, of Mr. W—’s free and unreserved disposition, had happened to be present at the general meeting of the children of Israel, where the *vociferation* must have been immense, as a whole nation joined in the responses, it is easily perceived how it would have ended. The *nursing mothers* †, and especially that of the Jews, were not remarkable at that time for keeping their temper. Impatience of contradiction, and intemperance in words meeting together, stones and brick-bats would in all likelihood have been of the party, and the sufferer would have found friends at last to canonize him.

I have already quoted a passage from Josephus to prove, that the Jews made no alteration in the laws which had once received the sanction of public authority among them; I will now quote another to the same purpose from the same writer. “Whereas, “ (says he) other nations think themselves notable “ and praiseworthy, in not abiding by the customs “ of their ancestors; we think, on the contrary, that “ never to attempt or meditate any thing against the “ laws established from the beginning, is the true “ characteristic of prudence and virtue §.”

We may take it for granted therefore that the Jewish worship, in the time of Christ, was no other than that established by Ezra: and we shall

* Pag. 27. † Pag. 9.

§ Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι τῷ μεθεῖν, &c.—*Contra Apion*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

be confirmed in this idea, if we consider that the latter still obtains among the modern Jews, both with regard to mode and substance; and that the service of the primitive Christians, manifestly borrowed from the Jewish Synagogue, as has been proved by the learned*, consisted chiefly in the reading of the Scripture, and the utterance of prayer.

Prayers, both private and common, are accordingly mentioned in every description which has been given of the service of the Synagogue, whether by Jewish or Christian writers. Private prayers were repeated individually, but the next were delivered by the *Chazan*, or minister of the Synagogue; the people attending to them with their heads covered, and repeated inclinations. This short sketch is copied from two writers† whose names alone, with respect to many, would be sufficient to warrant its accuracy. However as opinions differ, and as I wish to leave no doubt on the subject here under consideration, namely, "the united noise of the parson, and the congregation," I will endeavour to prove more particularly, that this circumstance is not peculiar to the Christians of the present age, but that they have it in common with the Jews, taking their mode of worship as it stood when Christ lived amongst them. The nature of my assertion requires that I should consider

* Vitringa in *Observationibus Sacris de Synagoga veteri*.

† Beausobre & L'Enfant *Preface Générale sur le N. T.*

it. I. With regard to the real existence of Social Worship among the Jews. II. With regard to the substance, or component parts of that worship among them.

I. That Social Worship was, as it still is, practiced among the Jews, at the beginning of the Christian æra, is evident. (1) From their Synagogues having been from time immemorial, under the direction of an inspector or minister, whom they called *the Chazan*, whose office is thus described by their own writers. *The Chazan**, an inspector of the congregation appointed to take the lead in public prayers †. (2) From the use of Liturgies among them, both for the service of the Synagogue and Temple, which Liturgies being repeated, by the Chazan in the Synagogue, and the Priest in the Temple, the people answered to the prayers contained in the former, by the usual acclamation, *Amen*; and to those in the latter by certain doxologies §. (3) From the ideas of superior excellence and efficacy which they attached to prayers uttered in concert with a whole congregation. God, says

* Chazan inspector congregationis ille est qui Ecclesiæ præit in præcibus publicis. Elias Levita ex Baal Aruch, Apud Vitringam in Archisynagogo.

† Buxtorf on the word *Chazan*, says accordingly, Nuntius Ecclesiæ qui destinatus erat Synagogæ necessariis operis præstandis. Hic maxime oratione seu præcibus & cantu Ecclesiæ præibat. Diction. Rab. Talm.

§ See Lightfoot Horæ Hebraic. in Matt. vi. 9.

one of their writers, “ does not reject the prayers of
 “ the congregation, though sinners should make part
 “ of it; it behoves a man therefore, to join in its
 “ prayers, that he may not pray alone, while he has
 “ an opportunity of praying with the congregation*.”

II. That the Jewish prayers in the Synagogue, consisted of something more than mere blessings, as surmised by Mr. W—, is probable from Paul’s instructions to Timothy †, respecting public prayers which he divides into *Supplications*, *Prayers*, *Intercessions*, and *Thanksgivings*: for it can hardly be supposed that the Jewish Synagogue which, in every other respect, except the doctrine, was the archetype of the Christian Synagogue, as the Christian place of worship is called by one of the Apostles §, should not have had something similar in the division of its prayers. We find accordingly that it divided them into *Blessings*, *Supplications*, and *Petitions* ‡, the first comprehending doxologies, or blessings properly so called; the second, prayers for the remission of sins; the third, supplications for various blessings, more particularly, for the preservation

* *Orationes congregationis non respuit Deus, etiam si mixti illic adsint peccatores. Necessse est ergo ut homo se congregationi associet, ne solus oret, cum datur opportunitas orandi cum congregatione. Thephil. cap. 8. Apud Lightfoot. Hor. Heb.*

† 1. Tim. ii. 1. § James ii. 2.

‡ See Ikenii *Antiquit. Hebraicæ* part i. chap. ii. and Buxtorf. *Diction. Rab. Talm.* in voce *Selichouth*.

and proper use of such as are dispensed daily by the bountiful hand of Providence*.

Mr. W— informs us that he has visited the Synagogue, and gives it as his opinion that “when the high priest makes a prayer, it is to himself, the congregation neither hearing, nor seeming desirous to hear him;” but as *he* does not “pretend to any satisfactory acquaintance with the subject of Jewish devotion;” the query is, what those have advanced who have made it the favorite subject of their study. Had Mr. W— but looked into the works of these men, he would have gained more information concerning the Jewish manner of worshipping the Deity, in one hour, than he could in twenty spent in the Synagogue.

These men, far from siding with Mr. W— in questioning the existence of Social Worship among the Jews, speak of it as a thing too well known to enter into a particular detail of the proofs on which rests its reality. Of this I shall give but two instances, as more would be tiresome to the reader. The learned Lightfoot, than whom no commentator has thrown more light on the Gospel History, has the following paragraph in his account of the Jewish Synagogue: “To inform the reader that public prayers were delivered by the *Chazan*, in the name of the congregation, who answered Amen to every one of them, would be needless, and to transcribe these prayers would be tedious. No one

* Josephus Contra Apion, lib. ii, cap. 23.

" can be ignorant that prayers constituted the principal part of the service of the Synagogue."* Vitringa the father, though a competitor with Lightfoot for the Talmudistical laurel agrees, nevertheless with him, in giving exactly the same account of the ancient *Jewish* mode of conducting divine service. " The prayers of the Synagogue," says he, " we read by the *Chazan*, out of certain books of Liturgies containing the prayers of the ancient Church."† Professor Vitringa's assertion is the more to the purpose, as he had told his reader before hand, that he confined it to the state of the Synagogue at the time of Christ and his Apostles. § The inference to be drawn from these premises is obvious.

If social worship was in use amongst the Jews, and nearly in the same form as the present Christian worship, it is rash, it is unpardonable, to stigmatize the latter as " the parade of misguided superstition, " as the contrivance of mere hypocritical formality."

* Non opus est ut memoremus fufas pro toto coetu, ab Angelo Ecclesiæ præces, coetumque unicuique orationi respondentem Amen; & nimium effet præces istas singulatim recitare. Sat notum omnibus præcipua opera in Synagogis fuisse præces. Hor. Heb. in Matt. iv. 23.

† Fundebantur vero præces a ministro Synagogæ ex certis formularum libris, qui veteris Ecclesiæ præces complectebantur. Vitringa Lib. cit.

§ In rituum a ministris Synagogæ observandorum, ad illa tantum munia spectabimus, quæ illis tempore Christi & Apostolorum fuerunt demandata, Ibid.

No difference can reasonably be suggested, which will justify these odious appellations with regard to the one, and render them unwarrantable with respect to the other. Had the Jews no demure hypocrites among them? No men, who after passing six days in total disregard of their duty, "smote their breast" on the seventh, and lifted up their hands and eyes "in all the mimicry of devotion?" Or was their public service as free from noise and acclamations as that which takes place in the closet? The aspersions therefore falls alike upon the Jewish and Christian worship. And if so, how could Christ overlook such blemishes in the former? Either he was not, what he pretended to be, *the good shepherd who taketh care of his flock*, or those who entertain such unfavorable notions of Public Worship are totally mistaken.

Mr. W— is very solicitous to discover passages in the Gospel History, on which he may ground his prejudice against Social Worship; and as it generally happens to those who labour under any preconceived opinion, there is not a single fact or saying there, susceptible of misconstruction in his way, which he does not bring forward, as a clear and decisive proof of what he wishes to establish. Mistaken man! His endeavours might be excused, had Christ at any time marked in his conduct a strong dislike to this mode of honoring the Deity, and avoided at all times, as some do among us, the buildings consecrated to this purpose: but as we are told in the Gospel History, that he made
it

it a rule to attend them wherever he came, I wonder that Mr. W— should be so earnest in forcing upon some of Christ's precepts and actions, a sense so derogatory to Social Worship in general. Is not this stamping a mark of inconsistency upon his character? Is not this placing him below the level, of some whom, though differing in opinion with them, we commend for their disinterested and unshaken attachment to what they consider as truth? In any one of the censures he passed upon the guilty race, did he ever give reason to suspect that he was not in earnest, by setting himself an example of the folly which he condemned? Did he ever appear in public with large phylacteries, or pieces of parchment containing scraps of the law, sown upon his garment? Did he ever affect to stand foremost in the Synagogue? Or did he ever fall into any mistake, which might be retorted upon him, as a proof that his conduct was not of a piece with his doctrine? From these and the like considerations, there is great reason to suppose that Mr. W— is wrong, totally wrong, in his allegations from the Scripture in support of his hypothesis. However, as he considers them as so many strong holds, in which he may set at defiance the patrons of Social Worship; it is necessary that he, or at least those who place any confidence in his judgment, should be undeceived; which I shall endeavour to do in the remaining part of this pamphlet.

SECTION II.

Mr. WAKEFIELD's Arguments from the Practice of Christ examined.

THE first passage which Mr. W— adduces as a justification of his attack of Public Worship is, that in Matt. xiv. 23. *And when Jesus had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come he was there alone.*

From Mr. W—'s comment on this passage, one is inclined to fancy Christ surrounded on this occasion with a troop of well-disciplined Calvinists and other dissenters, who, unconscionable men! after having partaken of the repast provided for them by *the Holy Nazarene**, expected it seems, to be regaled with a long prayer in their way, namely, with *Ascription, Confession, Supplication*, besides many other particulars, and whom it was necessary therefore to break, once for all, of such bad habits.

Mr. W— hates long prayers, "I yawned at them," says he, "in my childhood, I slumbered over them in my maturer years."† This infirmity is not peculiar to Mr. W—. I have known many a martyr under those circumstances; but few that had recourse in their long sufferings to Mr. W—'s

* An expression borrowed from Mr. W—.

† Ibid. pag. 21.

expedient;

expedient; who, like the lusty Chanter, in Boileau's *Lutrin*, proposes on every occasion the knocking-down plan, with this difference however, that one thinks it practicable without Latin, and the other, without Hebrew antiquities*.

If long prayers be a sin, we do well to admonish those, who have contracted this habit. But this should be done with temper: as otherwise, we do more harm than good. Both he that prayeth too much, and he that prayeth too little, will appear before the great Judge. All we have to do with respect to either, is to consider, which is the most likely to be acquitted, and to act accordingly.

Those present at the miracle of the two fishes and five loaves were not the people whom Mr. W— imagines. They were Jews, whose taste for Social Worship, when they had any, spent itself regularly twice a day in the Synagogue, and no where else. They were what some people are still in this country, zealots whose violence was for ever ready to overpower those, who should propose any other form of worship, than that which had been delivered to them by their fathers. But what should be more particularly attended to, is this. They were men who groaning under oppression, fiery in their temper, and desperate in their undertakings, were

* En plaçant un lutrin on croit nous rabaisser,
Mon bras seul sans Latin, saura m'en délivrer.
Qu'importe qu' Arnaud me condamne ou m'approuve?
J'abbats ce qui me nuit, partout où je le trouve.

LUTRIN.

at that very time looking out for an opportunity of shaking off the yoke; and who, seeing Christ work miracles in their favor, made no doubt of his being sent to their relief, and were come accordingly to a resolution of proclaiming him king without delay.

That this is a fair representation of the circumstances relative to Christ's departure into the mount, becomes unquestionable from the account given of it by John:—

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth, that prophet, that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

Mr. W— is so kind as to refer us to Marc. vi. 46 and 47 †, as a parallel passage to Matt. xiv. 23. Had he been so fortunate as to think of John vi. 14. and just looked over its contents, he would have had time to cool, and found himself in a disposition of mind, much more favourable to truth and accuracy, than that in which he was, when flushed with the prospect of triumph, he expressed himself thus:—

“ In the mean time, Jesus himself far from the
“ bustle, and inspection of this congregation, re-
“ tired to offer up his unostentatious devotion, to
“ that omnipotent Spirit, who saw in secret, and
“ would reward openly. The recesses of a moun-
“ tain, and the gloom of night, furnished the stage

* John vi. 14, 15.

† Pag. 8.—Note.

“ and

“ and scenery for the intercessions and supplications
“ of the holy Nazarene.”

These are, no doubt, very notable flourishes.
Flourishes which, on any other occasion, would not
have disgraced the pages of a Hurd, or a Blair.
But—alas!

—nunc non erat his locus—

*Jesus perceived that they would come and take
him by force and make him a King. He departed
therefore again into a mountain himself alone.*

The reason which induced Christ to retire into a
mountain, was not, as Mr. W— imagines a de-
sire of disappointing some poor people hungry
after social prayer; but an apprehension of causing,
by an untimely delay, a dangerous commotion,
which Christ was the more inclined to avoid, as in
consequence of the tragical death of John the Bap-
tist, he wished at that time to remain unobserved,
and had on this account retired into the desert*.

Mr. W— has adduced several other passages of
the kind just noticed: which I shall now answer, in
the aggregate, by the following general observation.

I have already hinted at the unusualness of that
separate kind of Social Worship amongst the Jews,
which Mr. W— expects to find authorized in the
Gospel History, and if we attend to the following
circumstances, we shall not be at a loss how to ac-
count for it.

Selected out of the common mass of nations to
be the depositories of the doctrine of one God,

* Matt. xiv. 13.

creator and preserver of all things, the Jews, ever since the beginning of their existence as a people, had been trained up in habits of the strictest uniformity, with respect to the manner in which the Deity was to be worshipped. With a view to this, Moses, in opposition to the sacred groves and hills of the Gentiles, had erected the tabernacle, and commanded the Israelites, thither to carry their burnt offerings, their tithes and sacrifices *: thither to direct their steps when disposed to assemble in the name of the Lord their God †; and rigorous beyond measure were the punishments denounced against the opposers of this injunction. *If a prophet, a dealer in signs and wonders had taught any thing to the contrary, though his signs and wonders should come to pass, he was to be put to death §.* Nay, if a man had been tempted by another, to worship in a way *not known to him before, nor to his fathers, whether the seducer were his son, his daughter, the wife of his bosom, or his friend which he loved as his own soul, the seduced was to divest himself at once of all pity, and be the first who laid violent hands on him, in order to take away his life ‡.*

Whatever might be the opposition to this Law of Moses under the Kings of Judea, when the contest between the monarchical and theocratical party ran high ||. Certain it is, that under the Maccabees, when Theocracy was re-established, and the reins

* Deut. xii. 6. † v. 7. § Chap. xiii. 1, 2 and 5.

‡ v. 6—10.

|| Ikenii Antiq. Heb. part II. cap. iii. § 16.

of government wholly thrown into the hands of the priests, it recovered the full ascendancy, which it has preserved ever since. From that time the cry amongst the Jews has been constantly, *One God, one mode, one place of worship*. That this was their doctrine when Christ appeared among them, appears from Josephus*, whose words I have here in a great measure copied; and that they put it, at that time in practice, is evident from the little encouragement they gave to strangers. The Jews had their Synagogues, in Alexandria, in Antioch, in Rome, in almost every one of the distinguished cities of the empire; but no heathen places of worship, of what kind soever, were suffered in that part of the land which was in the occupation of the Jews only; and no sooner had Christ's Apostles and First Disciples, begun to set up another name in opposition, as it were, to that of the Lord † than they were ask'd by what authority they did it. A question which not being answered in a satisfactory manner, furnished an occasion of putting one of them to death, under a pretence of having spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God §; and great havock was made of the Church, men and women being dragged out of their houses, and committed to prison ‡.

Such were the laws of the Jews and their attachment to them, at the time of Christ's coming. The

* Εἰς τὰς ἐνὸς Θεοῦ. Cont. Apion. Lib. ii. cap. 23.

† Act. iv. 17, 18.

§ Act. vi. 11.

‡ iv. 2.

enmity which subsisted between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, so far from retarding the operation of these laws, only served to render it more stable. Both these parties courted popularity; by a strict attention, the one to tradition and legal ordinances, the other to the administration of justice and moral propriety. In consequence of which, whatever wore the aspect, in the eyes of the multitude, of an innovation in the Law of Moses, became an immediate object of animadversion to both parties; and the Sadducees were the more inclined to execute the law against the Christian Doctrine as it taught the Resurrection from the Dead.

If we take into consideration all these circumstances, viz. The extreme rigor of the Jewish Law against innovators in religion; the unshaken attachment of the people to these laws; and the vigilance of their magistrate, with a view to their execution, so as to preclude as much as possible, and at all times, any practice or institution to the contrary; we shall have no occasion for Mr. W—'s hypothesis to account for Christ's reserve with regard to the introduction of a Social Worship, distinct from that of the Synagogue. It is abundantly explainable from the nature of such an undertaking, which was consistent neither with the laws of the country, the temper and habits of the people, nor, what I should have mentioned first, the plan of conduct adopted and followed by Christ during the whole course of his ministry, which was to avoid every action that subjected him to the imputation of having a design either

either upon the civil or ecclesiastical establishment of the country *. Whether praying to the multitude, or his disciples, in private houses, in the streets, and in the fields, and drawing by that means people from the Synagogue, was not incurring that imputation, I must leave to the reader.

“ But, says Mr. W—, we are told in various instances by the Gospel writers, that our Lord frequented the Jewish Synagogue, that he was a constant attendant in the Temple, and in all these instances, (observe this reader, adds Mr. W—) not to pray, but for the sole purpose of promoting by incidental admonition, and pious lessons, the substantial improvement of his hearers, &c.—yes, the Captain of our Salvation, was accustomed both to walk and teach, and dispute and preach, but never prayed in the Temple.”

From Mr. W—’s address to his reader, and the sudden swell of his phraseology, we may take it for granted, that he looks upon this as one of his most notable touches. It rests however, on the slenderest foundation imaginable. On a supposition that the Laws of the Synagogue, at the time of Christ and his Apostles, were such as suit Mr. W—’s hypothesis.

Before we draw any inference from the circumstance of Christ not having prayed to the multitude, either in the Temple or the Synagogue; we should be certain that among the Jews of old, as among

* See Locke’s Reasonableness of Christianity.

Fox's and Menno's Disciples in our days, this office was left entirely at the discretion of any one, who chose to take it up. But who, except a slave to prejudice, will venture upon such an assertion? What a private man: the son of a carpenter, (for Christ was no more in the eyes of the Jewish hierarchy) enter the temple: enter the Synagogue at any time: move boldly towards the altar or ark: take the place of the Priest or the *Chazan*, and without any further ceremony, officiate in his stead, whether he was required to do so or not? Let us apply this idea to the present time. Human nature will be for ever the same, under the same circumstances, and I may add, that the rights of the priesthood were as well defined, among the Jews, as they are among us. But what would be the consequence, if a layman, of any rank whatever, was to mount the pulpit in any one of our places of worship, and pray, in spite both of the minister and congregation? Whether in the Church, or conventicle, would not such a man be turned out as an intruder, and punished, or at least confined, as a disturber of the peace, should he persist in attempts of this kind?

Circumstances were exactly similar in the Synagogue, at the time when Christ dignified it with his presence; each Synagogue had its ministers, each minister had his separate place and office; every part of the service was conducted with regularity, according to fixed and immutable laws, with which Christ could not interfere, without subjecting himself to suspicions and penalties, which, if
we

we judge from the whole tenor of his conduct, he wished above all things to avoid *.

We are told indeed, that Christ read in the Synagogue, and preached in the temple; but this can in no shape invalidate the preceding observation; as the privilege of reading belonged to the laity, as well as the priesthood; with this restriction only, that those who, among the former class, stood up for the performance of the office, could not proceed to it, unless they were called out for this purpose by the *Chazan*, and submitted to his inspection, that he might correct their mistakes, in case they made any. Proofs of these particulars may be found in almost every writer upon the subject of the Synagogue †. But, I think, I may challenge Mr. W— to produce a passage, from any one writer of this class, proving that the office of taking the

* See Reasonableness of Christianity, by Locke, a vol. of his works.

† *Quilibet vero ad legendum assurgit usque ad numerum septenarium, etiam parvulus.* Persons of any class, a child not excepted, may stand up for the purpose of reading, their number not exceeding seven. In Colbo, cap. xvii. apud Vitringam, lib. cit.

Chazan, inspector congregationis ille est, qui Ecclesiae praeit in precibus publicis, et appellatur CHAZAN, eam forte ob rationem, quia illi incubuit videre, quomodo lector legeret, et quos ille evocaret ad legendum in lege. The *Chazan* is the Minister of the congregation, who presides in the public prayers of the Church. He obtained this name probably, because it was incumbent on him, to see how the law was read, and to call out those who were to read it. Elias Levita ex Baal Aruch. *ibid.*

lead in public prayers might, at any time, be assumed, in contempt of the *Chazan*, by any one who resorted to the Synagogue for this purpose.

The same right and restriction took place with regard to the liberty of preaching, either in the Synagogue or the temple. It was common to the laity and clergy: but no one could assume it, in either of these places, without leave from the president. We read accordingly, that when Christ had taught in the temple, he was asked, by *what authority he took upon him this function**: and as he was considered among the people as a worker of miracles, and had in more than one instance given proofs of superior knowledge, it is to be presumed, that this authority had been actually granted him by some, having power of dispensation to this effect†. Nor does Matthew's allegation, that Christ taught as having authority, and not as the Scribes, prove any thing to the contrary.

The Scribes, as Clerks, or men of knowledge, either in the law or tradition, were admissible to the function of teaching, but could not exercise it, any more than Christ, without authority from the higher powers. In this respect therefore, both, as teachers, were upon a level; but they differed, as to the proofs on which they grounded their respective doctrine. The Scribes appealed for the truth of what they advanced to tradition and precedents; Christ quoted no authority: confident of

* Matt. xxi. 23.

† See Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in Matt. iv. 23.

the truth of his doctrine, he claimed no deference to it, but what would arise from a proper attention to its nature, and the works which accompanied it. Hence the contrast so frequently introduced in this chapter: *You have been told, so and so, but I tell you, &c.* Matthew's allegation has therefore a reference to the proofs on which the truth of Christ's doctrine was grounded, and not to the dispensation from which it derived its legality.

It is said, that *Christ stood up to read in the Synagogue at Nazareth*, and this is, according to Lightfoot, the only instance of the kind mentioned in the Gospel History: for which he gives this very good reason, that Christ was here in his own Synagogue, and stood up accordingly to read as one of its members*. He observes, some where else, that circumstances are often omitted by the sacred historians, because being universally known, at the time they wrote, there was no occasion to mention them; and his remark is no where more applicable, than in the present instance; where it is said, that *Christ stood up to read*, without previous mention of his having been called out for this purpose.

Mr. W— challenges us to produce one single positive proof of the existence of Social Worship among Christ and his Apostles†. Mr. W— would do better to confine the challenge to the practice of

* Legit tamen, quod non ab eo in alia Synagoga factum, nam heic erat in propria, et legit ut membrum istius Synagogæ. Her. Heb. ad Luc. iv. 16.

† Pag. 13.

Christ; for with respect to that of the Apostles, it is of so desperate a nature, that he himself not trusting to it, has accordingly provided a salvo, to bring himself off, in case there should be occasion for it; which salvo is no other than the calling in question the authority of the Apostles. "Granting," says he, "for the sake of argument, that Public Worship, like ours at this day, was customary among the Apostles, would this be a sufficient authority, without the example and injunctions of their master?"* But of this allegation of Mr. W—more hereafter.

With regard to Christ, if, as has been observed, he could not introduce a Social Worship, separate from that of the Synagogue, without striking against laws, customs, prejudices, and manners, which it was as yet neither his interest nor intention openly to contradict; what does Mr. W—'s challenge amount to, but to a demonstration that, having no pretence to any satisfactory acquaintance on the subject of Jewish devotion, it behoves him to consider, whether to the many qualifications, which he is said to possess, as an interpreter of the Scripture, it would not be right to add one more, which he does not possess?

Christ and his Apostles taught by example, as well as precept. Supposing, therefore, that they had left no express command with regard to the necessity of attending Public Worship, yet, as we are certain, that they attended it themselves where-

ever they came; and as we know moreover, beyond all doubt, that the first, the immediate disciples of the Apostles practised Social Worship among themselves, and were encouraged in it by regulations delivered to them by their teachers; is it not infinitely more agreeable to reason and common sense, to adhere to it, as part of the fundamental institution of Christianity, than to decry it as an hypocritical and antichristian practice?

A man of Mr. W—'s extensive knowledge and experience cannot be ignorant that, matter of opinion in general, and especially where religion is concerned, is with most men, matter of provocation, of strife, of animosity, of hatred, of violence; when, on this score, they are traduced, either as fanatics, or ill-designing men. And yet how unguarded is Mr. W— in his strictures on those, who consider Social Worship, whether in the Temple, or in the family, as an indispensable duty! What then, is Mr. W— absolutely incapable of forbearance, or does he think that there are opinions of so bad a nature, as to have no claim to the benefit arising from the exercise of this virtue, and that a strict adherence to Social Worship is of the number? Mr. W—'s conduct in this respect, is the more reprehensible, as he himself stands in need of much indulgence. He has engaged in a career, where to secure applause, there are other qualities, besides a bold and disinterested spirit, required. A man who thinks himself wiser than the rest, ought to keep this secret to himself, till he can disclose it

in such a manner, as not to incur the imputation of embarrassment or inadvertency. How far Mr. W— has kept clear of this reproach, let the reader judge. Though earnest in endeavouring to foresee and obviate difficulties, it is easily perceived that there is not one, to which he knows how to make an uniform and satisfactory answer.

Nor will Mr. W—'s method, if viewed in another light, answer the reader's expectation better. He adduces, in support of his opinion, passages from the Scripture: but, so unnatural is the application of them, when the whole of the Gospel History is taken into consideration; so vague, so desultory are his remarks to remove this objection; that instead of shewing himself, on this occasion, an able interpreter of the Scripture, he subjects himself to the suspicion of writing from the mere impulse of prejudice; the whole of his reasoning dwindling into declamation, and a kind of enthusiastical rant, when the success of the cause depends wholly upon the coolness and good sense of its advocates. Of this I have already given a notorious instance: I shall soon have occasion to notice another.

SECTION III.

Of the Precepts of Christ, supposed by Mr. W— to suppress Social Worship.

THE proofs adduced by Mr. W— which I have examined hitherto, employ his first section; in a second he brings forward precepts, which, as he supposes, condemn either directly or indirectly, Public Worship as inconsistent with the Religion of Christ.

Christ, says Mr. W—, condemns Social Worship directly, in the following words:

And when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father who is in secret: and thy father, who seeth in secret, will reward thee openly.

In reading over what Mr. W— has remarked on this passage, I was struck with his manner, which, from its positiveness, naturally leads to the supposition that it is impossible Mr. W— should be mistaken; and yet when I came to examine the ground on which he proceeds, I wondered how a man so averse to ostentation, in other respects, should have such a propensity to it in his mode of reasoning. But perhaps there is more meaning in his language,
than

than I am aware of; let me therefore argue the case once more with him, and let him speak first.

Mr. WAKEFIELD. "The whole weight of the question might be securely rested on this adamantine pillar, and we may defy, either the subtleties of argument to undermine its base, or the force of evidence to throw it down". Our Divine Master is here introduced as directing his Disciples, in the clearest and most unequivocal declaration that language can convey upon the very point of duty that occupies our attention, "What exception can be imagined to testimony like this?"

OPPONENT. Certainly none, provided we are allowed to follow its true meaning. You, Sir, think that it is to be understood in a sense strictly literal. I have no objection to this sense, provided it agrees with the context, and the usual language of the Gospel writers.

W——. Context! I'll have nothing to do with the context. The words are sufficiently clear without it.

Op——. If they were, you and I, who both prefer truth to any other consideration, should not dispute about them. Permit me, therefore, to observe, that they are levelled at the Pharisees, who, in their private, as well as Social Worship, by choosing the corners of the streets as the most proper

As there is a great deal of *imagery*, in Mr. W——'s paraphrase, I have copied it verbatim.

place

place for the one, and the standing up, so as to be conspicuous to all, as the most eligible posture for the other, manifestly betrayed an odious retrospect to the gratification of vanity; and in opposition to whom, Christ, in his simple and admirable manner, recommends that discretion which seeketh, not the applause of the multitude, but the approbation of him who seeth in secret, and will reward openly. His meaning, therefore, in the words here under consideration, is simply this;—When you pray, be it in private or public, banish from your thoughts every suggestion arising from a desire of vain glory and popularity, and confine yourselves to the view of offering to God an acceptable service, that you may obtain, by that means, the blessings which are the object of your petitions. The better to impress us with the true nature of this duty he introduces the idea of a closet, in the same manner as when, to make us understand the nature and difficulty of the sacrifice he requires from his disciples, he tells us that we should take up our cross, pluck out the right eye, cut off the right hand; not with a view to tie us to the literal observance of his words, but merely to bring within reach of the senses, what is of a spiritual nature: a mode of expression common in Scripture. *And thou when thou prayest, &c.* I humbly conceive therefore, that this beautiful precept has no manner of reference to the abolition of Public Worship.

W——. “Even the use of solitary prayer, in
“the Synagogue, or any public assembly of men,
“is not obscurely disapproved by this text.”

F

Op——.

Op——. I should be glad, Sir, to know the reasons which induce you to think so.

W——. “Because the reason of disapprobation here alledged against the Jewish hypocrites, is inseparable from the circumstances of the case. Such a mode of prayer must always, of necessity, carry an appearance of ostentation with it.”

Op——. You are very obliging, Sir, to mitigate the rigor of your sentence; but even as it stands now, it exceeds the bounds of moderation. The necessity of the appearance you mention, seems to me, in a great measure, to depend upon the temper of the observer. Blessed are the meek and candid. Blessed are those who seeing men prostrate at the feet of their Creator, can conceive them to be in earnest, and to have nothing in view, but the protection of their heavenly father; that notwithstanding their failings, the light of his countenance may still continue to shine upon them. But what shall we say of him, who a stranger to the suggestions of charity, propense to indiscriminate censure, sees nothing in his brother's attachment to Social Worship, but an unwarrantable desire of passing in the world for what he is not? Is not this arrogating to ourselves a right which belongs to God only? Is not this flying in the face of our master who has so expressly said, *Judge not that ye be not judged.* Notwithstanding your surmise Sir, the appearance of ostentation is not inseparable from Public Worship. But condemnation seems to me inseparable from your mode of reasoning;

ing; and as it does not lead me the way I chuse to go, I beg you will alledge something of a different nature.

W——. “ If inferences drawn from the former verse of this quotation be liable to dispute, the injunctions of the latter at least admit of no evasion, they are universally intelligible, and irresistibly convincing. The witnesses of our prayers, according to the command of our great instructor, is not to be the congregation of Christians, but the invisible Father of mankind. The theatre of our devotion must not be the Chapel, the Church or the Cathedral, tumultuous with the busy hum of man; but the secrecy and silence of the closet. It is not, Jesus tells us, the duty of an humble Christian, by ringing his bell or blowing his horn to invite multitude of spectators, to stimulate the fervor, and to testify the patience of his devotion. He is not expected to do homage to the Ruler of the universe as we pay our respect to earthly potentates in crouds and pomp and tumult.”

Op——. I understand you, Sir: when the bells ring, the Church opens, the croud gathers, the humble Christian may remain quietly by his fire-side, as Christ's precept authorizes him piously to imagine, that in one instance, he hears the horn of the Pharisee proclaiming supererogatory merit, and that in another he sees the opening of a theatre, in which every one is to act a farce, according to the best of his abilities.—These are no doubt, very

striking, and to some very pleasing impressions; but you do not tell us how Christ could possibly mean to convey them, without incurring the reproach of contradiction. Do you really suppose, that the drift of his precept is to forbid praying before any witness whatever?

W——. “We must shut the door of our closet that no eye, so much as of our own household, may obtrude upon the tranquillity of our meditation, and no vanity be gratified by the curious observance of an admiring brother.

Op——. But suppose the humble Christian has no closet, or no door to his closet. Or suppose, that being more remarkable for constant neglect than scrupulous attention, with regard to Public Worship, he may join the croud safely, without the hazard of being gratified by “the curious observance of an admiring brother.——Sir, To take Christ’s precept, in a sense strictly literal, is incumbering it with difficulties which will defeat its purpose. If “the curious observance of an admiring brother,” be our aim, in approaching the throne of mercy; the closet may become a Theatre, as well as the Church, or any other place of worship; and a sigh, a groan, a whisper may do as much execution for the gratification of vanity, as the ringing of a bell, or the blowing of a horn. It is the disposition of mind, and not merely the place in which we are to pray, which Christ means to regulate in his beautiful precept. If in consequence of it, no eye, not even of our own household,

hold, is to obtrude upon the tranquillity of our meditation; how came the Apostles*, how came Christ himself to pray before witnesses, and even before the multitudes†; and how came Paul to express a desire that a man should pray in all places§. I think, Sir, upon the whole, that prayers before witnesses, cannot, any more than those repeated in the closet, render us reprehensible in the eyes of the Deity.

W——. “Our concern is with God only. Let his inspection be our applause. The features of resignation unseen by man will be faithfully marked by his eye. The secret whisper, the retired sigh, unheard in the congregation, will vibrate in his ear.”

Op——. I know that *he who seeth in secret, will reward me openly*: but I know also, that if in my address, I confine my thoughts to him, as the Father of light, the Source from which cometh every good gift, I shall receive this reward, whether I pray to him in private or public; as in both instances, he alone discovers the motive which actuates me. And here I cannot help observing, that in throwing out sarcasms against the various modes and forms‡ of worship, and against the disputes which have arisen from them, you shew much intemperance.

W——. “I would defy the most philosophic

* Act. xx. 36. † Matt. xi. 25.

§ 1 Cor. xiv. ‡ Essay, pag. 29.

“gravity

“gravity of face to withhold a smile; at the recital
 “of such puerilities, unless the sentiments of phi-
 “lanthropic commiseration, for the weaknesses of
 “poor human nature, and the pang of sorrow at
 “this degradation of his species, should overpower
 “the propensity to merriment, and dissolve in
 “tears *.”

Op —. I do not know Sir, what may “over-
 power your propensity to merriment;” but I
 know, that, if at any time, you have a mind to
 make me sick, deadly sick, you have nothing to
 do, but administer such another dose as the last.
 It is as rank a poison to me, as the Liturgy of the
 Church of England, or the long conventicle prayer
 is to you †.

END OF THE DIALOGUE.

The next precept Mr. W — adduces, as a direct
 proof of Christ's disapprobation of Social Worship,
 is that in John iv. 21, 23, 24.

*Jesus said unto her, Woman believe me, the hour
 cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor
 yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour
 cometh and now is, when the true worshippers, shall
 worship the Father in truth and in spirit, for the
 Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit,
 and they that worship him, must worship him in
 spirit and in truth.*

* Essay, pag. 30.

† Ibid. pag. 24.

The circumstances which gave birth to these words, are briefly as follows:

A Samaritan woman prepossessed with the idea that the true God could not receive the homage which is due to him, both at Jerusalem and on Mount Garizim, asks Christ, which she is to consider as the true place of worship. The answer is, "neither the one, nor the other." Not, that true worship was to be abolished, but it was to assume a different aspect. To confine the idea of it to a mere circumstance of place was reprehensible in the Samaritans, as well as in the Jews, God being a spirit, no one spot upon earth could be the place of his residence, more than another. Neither Samaria therefore, nor Jerusalem had an exclusive claim to this title, and in reference to this claim, God was to be adored in neither of these cities. Again; both Jews and Samaritans, taking it for granted that the most acceptable homage to the Deity consisted in meat and drink offerings, made them accordingly, the principal part of their religion. But if God be a spirit, how can he delight in *the flesh of bullocks and the blood of goats*. If there be ought which we can offer him, as deserving his acceptance, it is the oblation of our will and temper. This is altogether a suitable and real sacrifice: suitable, because, such as the Being is to whom the offering is made, such should be the oblation; God is a Spirit, the oblation should be of a spiritual nature accordingly: real, because when we regulate our will and temper according to his holy law, we
give

give up something which is actually our own; but not so when we present him with the flesh of oxen and the blood of goats. As the earth is his, and the fulness thereof, there is no real gift, nor resignation in the case.

The sacrifices which Christ requires from his disciples, are here evidently placed in opposition to those ordered in the Jewish and Samaritan Ceremonial; and viewed in this light the sense of the precept is analogous to the spirit of revealed religion in general, as well as to the nature of the occasion and the import of the words. But Mr. W— contends that it is levelled, moreover, at Social Worship.—“ When the latter verse (says he) is taken “ into consideration, the abolition of all Temple “ Worship, that is of all public devotion, and by “ fair inference every species of ceremonial religion, is spoken of as designed to take place at “ some period, not long subsequent to the time of “ this conference with the woman of Samaria.” In answer to which I observe, that whatever practices Christ means to condemn, in the precept here under consideration; it is evident that none, but such as are the reverse of *the worship in spirit and in truth* can come within the reach of his sentence; and who but a man blinded by prejudice would consider Public Worship in this light? Who will even deny its affinity with the former? Is not the utterance of heart-felt sorrow for offences committed, the effusion of gratitude for benefits received, or the humble supplication

tion for protection against impending evil, a service of a spiritual nature? But does it not come likewise under the description of what we have called a real or true service*? The expression of the like sentiments may indeed become an abomination, when made subservient to bad purposes: but that it is acceptable to the Deity, when proceeding from the opposite principles; is evident, from its being represented, under those circumstances, as a concomitant to deeds, ascending to heaven as offerings of a sweet savour. *Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God*†. Such is the nature of prayer in general, when it is the act of a good man: and to suppose, that notwithstanding its claims to such a connexion, it loses all its efficacy, from the mere circumstance of its being made in a temple, or any other circumstance whatever, which does not affect it, as a good deed coming from the good; is a paradox of such a magnitude, that I could not swallow it, was I ever so willing to yield to Mr. W—'s opinion. Much less, when

* Witness the reluctance of some, to devote the smallest portion of their pleasure to it.

† Prayers were considered as sacrifices by the ancients. In allusion to this idea, Ignatius calls himself *the Priest of Christ*, and speaks of *offering to him daily sacrifices*. Hist. Martyr. Ignatii § 5. Athenagoras calls the Christian prayers and rational worship, *a bloodless and spiritual sacrifice*. Legat. § 12. And Tertullian says, *We sacrifice when, according to Christ's precept, we pray with a pure heart*. De Orat. cap. 14.

I find him arguing in the following manner? " God
 " must be worshipped in truth and in spirit; con-
 " sequently, there is an end of temple worship,
 and by fair inference, of every species of cere-
 " monial religion."

It is evident that the parts of the preceding argument are in an inverted order. Every species of ceremonial religion should have followed immediately, after the first proposition, and the *fair inference* should have fallen upon *temple worship*; but even then, Mr. W—'s arrangement would not have produced the desired effect; as his conclusion would have implied more than his premises. Spiritual worship does not exclude every species of religious ceremonies, as there are some which may be called analogous to its nature, and which it may retain accordingly. Be this as it may: the precept in question is levelled at the Jewish and Samaritan ceremonial, and when Mr. W—, blending public prayers with purifications by water, sacrifices, oblations, as practised by the Jews, opposes the former as well as the latter to rational and mental devotion, he confounds things which have hitherto passed for distinct, in the opinion of all men, and which will remain so, notwithstanding Mr. W—'s positive, but bare assertions to the contrary.

To the precepts just noticed, are added other passages, which Mr. Wakefield calls indirect evidence upon the question, but which I shall not take into consideration, because, where, what is called

called direct evidence proves to be a mere mistake, that which was intended as a support to it, is of no value whatever. In a subsequent part of his Essay, Mr. W— undertakes to remove the objections, which may be made to his favourite doctrine; how far he has succeeded in this attempt, will appear from what follows.

SECTION IV.

*Mr. W—'s Manner of answering Objections,
considered.*

WHILST Mr. W— is railing at Modern Social Worship, and representing it, as “a medley of vain babblings, noisy shews, frantic gestures and solemn visages, as pharisaical enthusiasm*, as a dangerous, unfruitful†, anti-christian practice: as devout blasphemy in the name of the Lord§, as the leaven of hypocritical formality‡, contrary to the injunctions of the Son of God;” it is somewhat extraordinary, that he should all at once change his tone; and suggest the following idea:

But granting, for the sake of argument, that Public Worship, like ours at this day, was customary among the Apostles, would this be a sufficient authority for us without the example and “against the injunctions of their master? What might be very proper in the infancy of the Gospel, may be in no wise necessary, at a more advanced period of Christianity ||.”

Strange language for a man who professes a regard for Christianity! What the Apostles, the delegates, *not of men, but of God the Father, and Jesus Christ*, introduce, or even suffer, as proper,

* Pag. 13. † Pag. 39. § Pag. 30. ‡ 40.

|| Pag. 34.

as necessary, a worship deserving all the odious epithets bestowed on it by Mr. W—? They might indulge their novices with the continuance of a few ceremonies which, though unnecessary under the new dispensation, were notwithstanding harmless; but, to encourage them in antichristian practices, fraught with the leaven of hypocritical formality! was this acting the part of faithful ministers, who wished to use the authority delegated to them, not for the destruction, but edification of the people committed to their care?

But strange as this language may seem, it is easily accounted for when the whole of Mr. W—'s plan is taken into consideration. He is too well acquainted with the writings of the N. T. not to know that in more than one instance, they contain the strongest indications of the actual introduction, not only of Social Worship in the Apostolical Church, but even of a worship of this kind similar to ours*. To mistake the meaning of the passages

* What can be more decisive on this point, than Paul's directions to those, who prayed and prophesied, in a tongue unknown to the rest of the brethren. *If I pray, says he, in a tongue unknown, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful; What am I then to do? I will pray with the spirit, but so as to be understood.* (*προσεύχομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῦ, literally, I will pray to the understanding, namely, of those who hear me, for τῷ νοῦ is here the same as, τῇ τῶν ἀκούοντων οὐρανοῦ.*) *Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks?* 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

The same Apostle, in his instructions, relative to Public Worship, gives the following precept. *I recommend therefore,*

Sages here alluded to, is impossible. The practice they refer to necessarily implies the fact under consideration. Some expedient; therefore, was to be thought of to obviate the proofs they afford in favor of Social Worship; and it is pleasant to see Mr. W— working against wind and tide, in order to be beforehand with them, in directing the judgment of the reader concerning this important point. This is what he is aiming at in his Introduction; manifestly calculated to induce a belief, that an infancy, a youth, and a manhood, being discernible, in the several stages of religious communication, practices may be admissible in it at one time, which will not be so at another; and consequently that he, Mr. W—, must be allowed the liberty of granting, or not granting, the existence of Social Worship, and its similarity with ours, in the Apostolical Church, according as it will suit his convenience.

The time from the legation of Moses to the Babylonish captivity, Mr. W— calls *the Infancy**; that from the commencement of the captivity onwards to the appearance of the Messiah, *the youth of revealed religion*†. “During this its second stage, the great teachers of the Jewish nation,”

fore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority, 1 Tim. ii. 1. The manner of the address, its contents, its immediate appendages, every circumstance evinces, that it has an immediate reference to Public Worship.

* Int. pag. 4. † pag. 5.

says Mr. W—, * “ were gradually inculcating on
 “ their countrymen, a purer, and more sublime mo-
 “ rality, a more unincumbered spiritual devotion.
 “ The utter insignificance of ceremonial obser-
 “ vances, in the eye of the Supreme Being, when
 “ put in competition with refined affections, with ac-
 “ tive benevolence, and holy life, were maintained
 “ in the most explicit language, and the utmost af-
 “ fecting fidelity. The truly evangelical declaration of
 “ the prophet Micah was the substance of prophe-
 “ tic admonition. *He hath shewn thee, O man,*
 “ *what is good, and what does the Lord require of*
 “ *thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk*
 “ *humbly with thy God.*”

Revealed Religion, may for ought I know, have
 been in a progressive state of improvement from
 the time of Moses to that of Christ: but this does
 not appear from Mr. W—’s account of the matter.
The word of the Lord came to Micah in the days of
Jotham, Achaz and Hezekiah, kings of Juda†.
 His truly Evangelical declaration, therefore, came
 full two hundred years too soon to fall in precisely
 with Mr. W—’s arrangement, who means, if I
 mistake not, to apply more particularly, its spirit
 and substance to the youth, or second stage of Re-
 vealed Religion §, “ but the word of the Lord came
 to Micah, in the time of Jotham, &c.” It may be
 said; therefore, to appertain to the first instead of
 second stage of that religion. Nor does history any
 way confirm that preponderance of refined affec-

† Pag. 4 & 5. * Micah i. 1 § Pag. 4. lin. 23, 24, & 25.
 tions,

tions, of active benevolence, of holy life; which Mr. W— tells us was maintained in the most explicit language, amongst the Jews, during the second stage of their religion; in opposition to the insignificance of ceremonial observances. Their great teachers at that time, and more particularly at the latter part of it, were no other than the Pharisees. For, as Mr. W— justly observes, every doctrine but theirs was considered as an enormity*. And how these great teachers executed the charge they had taken upon them. How earnestly “they inculcated on their countrymen, a “purer and more sublime morality, a more uncumbered spiritual devotion,” may be best known from their character, as drawn by Christ in various parts of the Gospel History, but more particularly Matt. xxiii.

Mr. W—, after having represented the interval, between Babylonish Captivity and the coming of the Messiah, as the *youth* of revealed religion, adds, “Christianity is *its manhood and maturity*†; appellations which might have done tolerably well, had it not been for a few Jewish ceremonies, together with something like Social Worship retained by the Apostles; without the example and injunctions of their master, in consequence of which, Mr. W— finds himself under a necessity of considering Christianity as something separate from *Revealed Religion at large*§, and of sending the one to school, whilst the other is verging towards old age. This

* Pag. 5. lin. 14. † Pag. 4. § Pag. 6.
alteration,

alteration, sufficiently perplexing in itself, receives additional embarrassment from an unexpected, unaccountable, and almost incurable dullness of Christianity, which after having been kept to its alphabet for about eighteen centuries, is now, it seems, as much of a dunce as ever, notwithstanding Mr. W—'s prediction to the contrary*.

Involved and unsatisfactory as Mr. W—'s notions are, concerning revealed religion, they form his first line of defence, against objections arising from some passages of the Scripture relative to the practice of the Apostolical Church. "If it (Social Worship) were," says he, "an original appendage of the Gospel, this argument of progressive practical perfection, grounded on the exigencies of the primitive times, the genius of the Gospel, and the character of the human mind, would constitute alone in my estimation, a most powerful argument, when opposed by nothing better than mere usage and prescription."†

Mr. W— has provided another resource, in case he should be driven from his first ground; he furnishes, that the Apostles, even after being entrusted with the most extraordinary gifts and powers, as ambassadors of Christ, might introduce a Public Worship like ours at this day (consisting no doubt of a medley of babblings, solemn visages and pharisaical enthusiasm) without their authority being at all binding upon us‡. However, as Mr. W— wishes to be thought a believer in God and his

* Pag. 14, lin. 19.

† Pag. 6.

‡ Pag. 34.

Church, he gives it as his opinion, that no such worship has any authority from the injunctions or practice of Christ and his Apostles. But if this assertion be well-grounded; if the Apostles did not mean to encourage Social Worship, why not bring forward the passages, in which they are supposed to give directions about it? Why not make such remarks, as will, consistently with the object they had in view, and the respect which is due to their character, demolish the strong-hold they afford to the patrons of Social Worship?

Mr. W— introduces a section, with this fair title, **OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.** Here was an opportunity of noticing Paul's direction to pray in public so as to be understood, that the unlearned might join in the vocal assent, to the public thanksgiving*. Here was the place of proving that the same Apostle's precept, *I recommend, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men†, for kings and all that are in authority,* affords no argument in favor of the commonly received opinion, that a Social Worship, similar to ours, viz. consisting in petition for temporal blessings, as well as doxologies, &c. obtained in the Churches established by the Apostles. This step was the more necessary, as in the subsequent verses there is a manifest allusion to Public Worship. But notwithstanding this opportunity, and the duty incumbent on Mr. W—, after his bold assertion;

* 1 Cor. xiv. † 1 Tim. ii. 1.

neither in this section, nor in any part of his essay, does he take notice of these injunctions of the Apostle. He only says, in general terms, "Should this, (viz. the passage Luc. iv. 21) or "any parallel text, which I may have either undesignedly overlooked, or disregarded as unimportant, appear to the reader of consequence in the present question, he will do well in turn to consider the evidences on the other side;" upon which, I beg leave to make the following remark:

When Mr. W—, in the preceding paragraph, assigns a cause for his neglect of some parallel passages, I give him full credit for his declaration; but when he refers me to certain evidence for the solution of these passages, so as to render them of no importance in the present question, I ask, what evidence? I declare I do not know any which has that tendency: and what Mr. W— has advanced on the subject, so far from staggering, has only confirmed me in my disbelief. What has he done by appealing so frequently to the practice of Christ, but recal to mind the numerous instances in which he attended Public Worship; instances, which, like so many faithful witnesses, contradict in the most explicit manner, Mr. W—'s daring assertions? And when to supersede their fair testimony, he has presumed to question the existence of Social Worship among the Jews, or at least its similarity with ours, what has he gained, but the reproach of rashness and infatuation? Shall I give up my own sense, to follow the opinion of a man thus biassed?

Shall I take it for granted, that he cannot be mistaken in the sense he has been pleased to affix to certain passages of Scripture; in support of his paradoxes?

Nor does the hint he gives the reader, when he desires him to mark that Christ and his Disciples read, but never prayed, in the Synagogue, and the air of triumph he assumed upon the occasion, contribute any more to his credit. Had he been ever so little upon his guard, he would have kept that discovery to himself. From Mr. W—'s own confession, he has imbibed from the earliest period in life, the strongest, and most decided aversion to Social Worship; "I yawned, at long prayers," says he, "in my childhood; I slumbered over them "in my maturer years." A man labouring under such an infirmity, may *be a good man*, and may judge properly in other respects; but with regard to the particular object of his aversion, he cannot be supposed to see objects in a proper light. His passion will distort, will bend and prune them down to its own standard, without his perceiving it. To justify his prejudices, Mr. W— has accordingly adopted in this particular, a mode of interpreting the Scripture, the most favourable of any to fanaticism, superstition, and absurdity in general. He insists upon a literal acceptance of the precepts of Christ concerning Divine Worship. This is the manner in which the greatest of all errors are defended; and as the patrons of them know but one mode of answering objection, viz. the quoting the Scripture, where

where its literal sense, considered independently of the drift of the writer, coincides with their notions; just so does Mr. W— refer us over and over again to the literal meaning of one or two passages in the Gospel, taken separately from their context. This he calls an argument direct, explicit, and not to be eluded*.

If the letter be our only rule in interpreting the Gospel Doctrine, and more particularly Christ's precepts; Christian discipline, so far from being at an end, is not even begun. Some indeed have made it a rule, twice a day, and once in the night, to mortify the flesh with a scourge, which they carry in their hand for this purpose; but this is not enough, they should make it a point to cut off one hand, and to reserve the other, merely that they may be able to carry a cross upon their shoulders, and thus accomplish literally the will of their master. If this be the standard of their obedience to him, his yoke is a yoke indeed. Vain are our hopes of seeing the poor sufferers relieved by Mr. W—'s kind interference. He has begun his work at the wrong end. Instead of lightening the burden under which so many groan, alas! he should lay additional weights upon their shoulders; and

* To a mind teeming from early habits, with a variety of images, there is no knowing what appearances things may assume. "Beneath the shield of these arguments," says Mr. W—, "*I take my stand.*" Thus did a celebrated Knight of old, take his stand, beneath a barber's basin, which he took for a helmet.

With regard to himself, instead of avoiding the conventicle, he should never be out of it, as the rigor of its discipline, to use Mr. W—'s phraseology, "beggars, every thing that was ever heard of in this way, and would suffuse the cheek of the most rigid Israelite with a conscious blush of inferiority*."

Thus much for Mr. W—'s manner of removing objections, for I shall take no notice of his answers to two or three trifling allegations in favour of Social Worship, as it is no part of my plan to make any use of them at present.

In his next section, Mr. W— more and more persuaded, that his literal interpretation of Matt. vi. 5, 6. is abundantly sufficient to remove scruples about any other passage unfriendly to his hypothesis, has made some vague and general remarks, on what he calls the practice of the Apostles, to induce a belief, sometimes, (for Mr. W— is always upon the wing) that what has been taken for Social, was no more than private worship among the Apostles: at other times, that if any such thing existed among them, it was dissimilar, quite dissimilar to modern Public Worship: lastly, that when they

* The introduction of this Israelite, of this *suave rubens hyacinthus*, sweet blushing hyacinth, among the brambles of Presbyterian discipline, must be allowed to be very beautiful, and consequently very seasonable.—"I feel no difficulty," says Mr. W— in another place, "in declaring that public devotion with some, and particularly the Dissenters, would be to me a most irksome yoke, a most intolerable burden."

prayed

prayed together, they did no more than unite in the same sentiment, and present individually their petition to the Almighty.

As Mr. W— does not say a word in support of his first hypothesis, he saves me the trouble of making an answer to it; therefore, *valeat quantum valere potest*. With regard to his second, he surmises at one time (for here again he must be aimed at flying) that the Apostles, in their public prayer, confined themselves to expressions of praise and gratitude: at another, that gross improprieties and even wickedness mixes itself in the divine service of most, if not all modern Christians; and thus he speaks of the prayers, which are offered to the Almighty for the relief of those who suffer under the pressure of want, of disease, of bodily torment*. Mr. W— forgets that Christ ordered his disciples to ask for *daily bread*: that James recommends prayer to the afflicted; and to the sick the calling in of the elders, that they may pray for him, and he may recover. He forgets moreover, that men, imperfect beings as they are, use forbearance when importuned by improper petitions from their children ascribing them to their ignorance: and accordingly, that if there be ought, in our addresses to our heavenly Father, which strikes against his eternal laws, he will not, in compassion and mercy towards his children, be behind hand with those *who are evil*.

Lastly, Mr. W— observes, that “it is no absurd
“ supposition, and one abundantly defensible from

* Pag. 36.

“ other

"other writers, that the Evangelical Historian
 "means only to state the general sentiments of the
 "Apostles at that time, and the purport of the
 "prayer, which they individually presented to the
 "Almighty*.

To this representation of the matter, I beg leave
 to subjoin the Evangelical Historian's account of a
 devotional meeting, which took place among the
 disciples in consequence of Peter's and John's re-
 lease from prison, to which Mr. W— refers us in his
 note.

*And being set at liberty, they went to their own
 company, and reported all that the chief priests and
 elders had said to them. And when they heard that,
 they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and
 said, Lord thou art God which hast made heaven and
 earth," &c.†*

If Mr. W—'s explanation be just, it is evident
 that the individuals of this promiscuous company
 were all first rate exhibitioners in the practice of
 extempore prayer; and that the Sacred Historian's
 remark, *they lift up their voice with one accord*,
 applies to every one of them, so that all must be
 supposed to have spoken together. The former
 part of the inference is easily understood from the
 circumstance that this was the interval of miracles;
 but how shall we reconcile the latter with Mr. W—'s
 decided and so often declared aversion to vocifera-
 tion, to a medley of vain babblings, &c. &c.?

In some part of his Essay §, Mr. W— suggests

* Pag. 33. † Act. iv. 23. § Pag. 29.

that,

that, if Public Worship were really of that importance it has assumed in the eyes of mankind, God, to prevent the quarrels, which one day were to result from it, among a few of his children, calling themselves, the one the English Church, the other the Scotch Kirk, would certainly have left somewhere a declaration, so clear and positive, as to preclude all kind of controversy on the matter. As divine worship is one thing, and disputes about its form, another we may very well apply to this mode of arguing the expostulation of the satirist.

Dic mihi nunc quæso, dic antiquissime Divûm,
Respondes his Janus pater? Magna otia cœli?
Non est ut video: non est quod agatur apud vos.

Of godlike race, in years outdone by none,
Good father Janus! What? Round Jove's high throne,
For petty strifes of men, such solemn care?
Ye Gods, I see, have time, much time to spare.

In page 38, Mr. W— has the following observation,—“ For these visible and material services
“ have a tendency inseparable from their nature,
“ and extremely operative on feeble minds, to transfer devotion to mere semblances, from the life
“ and heart, to inculcate a persuasion never to be
“ done away—that outward performance may atone
“ for immorality.”

Mr. W— is here visibly confounding sacrifices, ablutions, aspersions, processions and the like, with Social Worship. But let us adopt for one moment his idea. If public devotion be a visible and ma-

terial service, so is that which takes place in private and individually: and if one have a tendency to transfer devotion from the life and heart to mere semblance, so has the other. A man of unsound principles, after having said his prayers in his closet, may think himself at liberty to sin, as much and perhaps more, than if he had said them in public. Nay, if the abuse of a thing render its abolition absolutely necessary, whatever be the consequence; the question is, where shall we stop?—What thing so useful, so venerable, so sacred, which, by the wickedness of man, has not served, in its turn, as a handle to imposture, and become, by this means, a source of confusion and mischief? If Mr. W— be authorized to use the language he uses, away, not only with your Social Worship, but away also with your Bible. If the argument

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum,
be applicable any where, it is to this written law. I shall make no other answer, therefore, to this allegation of Mr. W—, than that it proves too much.

APPENDIX.

SINCE my determination of sending the preceding sheets to the press, I met with a second edition of Mr. W—'s Essay, and soon after with his Reply to Dr. Priestley; but find no inducement in either, to make any alteration in what I have written; the whole being calculated to shew, that where a man's ideas are set adrift, so as to be observed floating, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, they cannot be considered as proper guides in the pursuit of truth and knowledge.

So far as regards Public Worship, and certain circumstances relative to it, I look upon Mr. W—'s faith as being extremely unsettled, and what he has advanced since, in addition to his first Essay, instead of removing, has only served to confirm my suspicion.

Mr. W— in the first edition of his Essay, sets out with an apprehension, that Public Worship has no title to an injunction or practice from Christ and his Apostles (page 6). He finds out afterwards, as he imagines, that the Saviour of the world had no relish for public prayer (page 12):—that a

design of justifying private prayer, and discouraging Social Worship, is manifest in many of his proceedings (page 11):—that he condemns the latter in plain and explicit terms, as inseparable from ostentation (p. 17);—and in consequence of these pretended discoveries, Mr. W— thinks himself at liberty to rail at Public Worship, as an absurd and dangerous practice; sentiments which are uppermost in almost every page of his Essay. However, “after a mature deliberation upon this subject, it is now Mr. W—’s firm persuasion, that “Jesus might allow and practice in those days, “what he by no means intended to be binding “upon his disciples.”

I need not point out to the reader, how, with regard to the practice of Christ and his Apostles, Mr. W— is here shifting his ground, and unsaying what he has said before: but I cannot help observing, that unless Mr. W— chuse to retract at the same time, what he has advanced concerning the nature and tendency of Public Worship in general, his concessions will not mend the matter; it is only making bad worse. Christ might overlook, for a time, the inefficacy of certain Jewish ceremonies, and permit the observance of them, as they were harmless; but Public Worship, according to Mr. W—’s representation, cannot be considered in this light. Nor can the difference, which he imagines, between Christian and Jewish worship, lessen any way the reproach, which he has thrown upon its observance in general. Mr. W— therefore, in speaking
ing

ing of Public Worship, is not warranted to say, that Christ might allow and practice, what he by no means intended to be binding upon his Apostles.

Again; Mr. W— has boldly advanced, that united devotion, whether in a family or congregation, is no more than “part of that hay and stubble, which has been laid on to the foundation of Christianity by officious zealots, to be destroyed by fire;” but as he now is of opinion, that part of that hay and stubble may have been laid on by Christ himself; Mr. W— sketches out a plan of Public Worship, in which he condescends to acquiesce, and this merely that he may not appear too morose. As I have all the reason in the world to believe, that Mr. W— is a man of the strictest integrity; I must believe also, that he is in earnest, when he thus recommends, or at least encourages in one place, what he marks in another, as the object of his strongest aversion.

Lastly; what is still more wonderful; in the plan of worship sketched out by Mr. W—, for the better edification of the well-meaning Christian, nothing occurs but what is to be met with in the practice and customs of almost every Christian community. He mentions in the first instance, “more learned, more assiduous, more disinterested teachers.” That unqualified shepherds will now and then find their way into the fold, cannot be denied: but is it fair to condemn a whole body merely from this circumstance? And where is the society, whose laws do not refuse admittance, as teachers, to individuals

als unworthy of such a charge? The ideas of learning vary indeed according to the character of the sect: but even among the most able to discriminate merit in this way, a head, though ever so ready to pour out Greek and Latin, will not pass on this score merely, as an opposite to the long-eared brotherhood.

Mr. W—'s next regulation is, that “the service should begin with select portions of Scripture, digested into something of order and similarity, in different sets, for different times; with a view to all the variety which the Bible can supply; and should be known by the people, as the only means of securing attention. These portions should be short, and their subject, the supreme dominion, the universal providence, wisdom, and goodness of Jehovah. These should be followed by similar portions from the N. T. relative to the Redemption and Resurrection of mankind, &c. but these also should be short.”

I have transcribed the whole of this paragraph, merely to shew, what shifts a man may be driven to, when, merely from ill humour, he is bent upon contradiction. Is Mr. W—then so great a stranger to places of Public Worship, as not to know, that what he here proposes, no doubt as something new, is practised in most, if not in every one of them? With this difference only; that when the occasional subject occurs in various parts of the Scripture, the reader in some congregations is left at liberty to chuse his chapter: not from a disregard to the instruction

struction of the people, but from the fear of tiring by too frequent repetitions. Either Mr. W— was careless when he sketched out his new plan, or he has felt his propensity to devotion so constantly overpowered, when he has happened to be present in places of Christian worship, that he knows no more what is going forward there, than what is going forward in the Jewish Synagogue.

The same reflexion will arise if we view Mr. W—'s plan for the better regulation of the next part of the service. "Then," says he, "should follow an exposition of some portion of the 'N. T. to be closed by a practical exhortation.' Is it possible to be more perverse than Mr. W— is here with the advocates for Social Worship? He vilifies their practices; he sets up for their reformer; and behold! in sketching out a plan for this purpose, he can think of nothing, but customs which have prevailed among them from time immemorial. I might say more; I might say that Mr. W— introduces into his plan those very practices, for which he vilifies his opponents. He rails at the custom of assembling in the Temple to pay a common tribute of adoration to the Deity, and recommends nevertheless its continuation: for, I take it for granted, when Mr. W— says, "The whole service should conclude with a short address from the Minister to God," (p. 56. Ap.) he means that the congregation should join in this address. He qualifies it indeed by observing, that it should be entered upon
" in

“ in a pure evangelical spirit of devotion, without
 “ any mixture of petitions relative to the mere
 “ prosperity and accommodations of the present
 “ life; of a merely worldly and personal nature,
 “ unconnected with eternity.” (ibid.) By which
 restrictions Mr. W— means, I suppose, to justify
 the contempt with which he has spoken of Public
 Worship in general: but unless he can
 prove, that God is not that tender and gracious pa-
 rent, he is supposed to be, willingly inclining his ear
 to the cries of those who suffer, and call to him for de-
 liverance: that Christ did not command his disciples
 to pray for daily bread; that Paul did not order
 intercessions for the welfare of all men, and especi-
 ally of those who are in authority; and lastly, that
 James never mentioned any thing about a sick man
 being raised up by the prayers of the faithful; and
 consequently, about the necessity of prayer in afflic-
 tions: unless Mr. W— can prove all this, his re-
 strictions will be laid aside, as perfectly nugatory.

Nor are Mr. W—’s regulations concerning the
 length of Prayer, any more likely to prove palate-
 able to the patrons of Social Worship. After the
 small degree of self-command he has shewn in treat-
 ing this subject, they will probably reject his in-
 terference as upon the whole very improper. Let
 him therefore be contented with the liberty of
 keeping at a distance from their public places of
 worship. Or if at any time, he chuses to join in
 their service, do not let him insist upon their joining
 with

with him, in the act of yawning and slumbering, as often as the address to the Deity exceeds the narrow bounds of his patience. They may, for aught he knows, consider such an habit as indecent, as criminal, as expressly condemned by Christ and his Apostles. We are told by St. Luke, that Christ spoke a parable to this end, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint** (Luke xviii. 1.); and should Mr. W—'s opponents, affixing to the word *to faint*, the sense of *yawning and slumbering*,

* καὶ μὴ ἐκκακεῖν. As the ancient inhabitants of Greece, knew no man superior to the brave; and none more contemptible than the dastard; they called the former, emphatically, ἀγαθός, and the latter, κακός. Several instances might be adduced from Homer; I shall quote but two. Iliad. E. p. 643. and Iliad. B. p. 365. In both places, κακός is explained by the ancient Scholiast, (Edit. Barnesii) δεινός, ἀδύνατος. From the word κακός, taken in this sense, comes the verb ἐκκακεῖν, which in its primitive signification, means accordingly *to misbehave in the day of battle, to run away from the assigned post*. Paul, that noble champion in the defence of Christianity, is fond of introducing the latter word, and uses it no doubt, with a reference to its first signification. See Gal. vi. 9. Ephes. iii. 13. 2 Thess. iii. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 16. In all these places, Beza translates the greek verb, *segnescere*, and the Vulgate, in three of them, *deficere*. It seems susceptible of a more emphatical turn, which I must leave however to better judges. In a secondary signification it applies to any business, in which he that undertakes it, flags, and proves faint-hearted and unsteady. Luke uses it to express that puffanimity, which shrinks back from the throne of mercy, because there is a delay in the manifestation of the supreme will of heaven.

utter, in a kind of transe the following exclamation;—" To the lover of truth, who wishes to adjust his conduct by the standard of the Gospel, " this emphatic passage will appear of inestimable " value, and indisputable as demonstration:" Mr. W— would probably be at a loss to find a proper answer; as this is the very language he uses, when, absurdly enough, he affixes a literal sense to Christ's precept concerning the obligation of praying in the closet. Be this as it may, with respect to prayer, as well as in other matters, ideas and manners vary. What appears to one, to exceed the bounds of discretion, may seem to another to fall short of it; and of all the causes of disputes none is more frivolous, more contemptible, than that which arises from an impatient desire of dictating in matters of this nature.

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